



A Publication of the
Judicial Council of Georgia

New Year Marked by Transitions —

New Chief Judge for Court of Appeals Takes Office

The Honorable John H. Ruffin, Jr., took the oath of office to become Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of Georgia on January 5, 2005.

Chief Judge Ruffin was introduced and sworn-in by US District Court Judge Anthony A. Alaimo. Speakers at the event included Judge J.D. Smith of the Court of Appeals and Justice Robert Benham of the Supreme Court of Georgia. Justices of the Supreme Court and judges of the Court of Appeals were present, along with many judges

from the Augusta area and Judge Ruffin's family and friends. Chief Judge Ruffin is the first African-American to serve as chief judge. He was appointed to the Court of



US District Court Judge Anthony A. Alaimo (left) gives the oath of office to Chief Judge Ruffin.

Appeals in 1994 by Governor Zell Miller after serving eight years on the superior court bench of the Augusta Judicial Circuit. Chief Judge Ruffin's legal career includes extensive civil rights litigation. A Burke County native, he attended Morehouse College and Howard University School of Law.

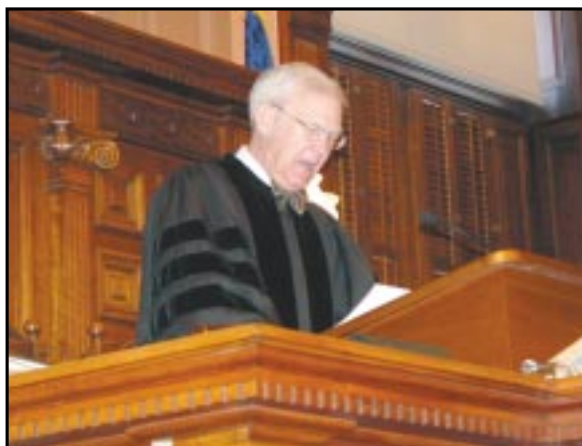
Bernes Begins First Term on Court of Appeals

Judge Debra Bernes, elected as the seventieth judge of the Court of Appeals, was sworn-in at the Capitol on December 27, 2004. ☞



Judge Debra Bernes

Fletcher Addresses the General Assembly



Of his impending retirement from the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Fletcher said, "I have been richly blessed with wonderful family and friends, strong faith, good health, and the great privilege of serving on your Supreme Court for 15 years. I deeply treasure the close friendships made with so many members of the General Assembly over these years."

For highlights of Chief Justice Fletcher's remarks, see page 3.

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People, Places and Events ...

In Memoriam

✱ **Senior Judge George Arthur Horkan, Jr.** of Moultrie died February 2, 2005, at the age of 78. Judge Horkan served the Superior Courts of the Southern Judicial Circuit for more than 30 years, during most of that time as the Chief Judge. Judge Horkan took senior judge status in 1994, but continued to hear cases until recently. Prior to taking the bench, he served as District Attorney for the Southern Circuit.

✱ **Judge John V. Harper** of Americus died December 19, 2004, following a sudden illness. He was 45 years of age. Judge Harper was elected to the bench of the Southwestern Judicial Circuit in 2000, his second term of office would have begun in 2005. He was a graduate of Georgia Southwestern College and the Walter F. George School of Law.

Retirement

✱ **Judge John Girardeau** of the Northeastern Judicial Circuit has announced his retirement for March 31, 2005. Judge Girardeau has served on the superior court bench since 1987. He served as president of the Council of Superior Court Judges and has been active in the creation of drug courts in Georgia.

✱ Ninth District Court Administrator **George Collins** retired on December 31, 2004 after serving 16 years. *See page 3 for photo.*

Appointments

✱ At a swearing-in ceremony held January 24, 2005 in the Capitol Education Center in Atlanta, Governor Sonny Perdue administered the oath of office to **Judge James R. Osborne**, Paulding Judicial Circuit. Judge Osborne was appointed to fill the vacancy created by **Judge W.A. Foster's** retirement. Judge Osborne served as the District Attorney for the Paulding Circuit prior to his appointment.



✱ **Mr. F. Andrew "Drew" Lane** was appointed to succeed Judge Osborne as District Attorney of the Paulding Circuit.

✱ On December 22, 2004, **Judge James R. Whitfield**, was appointed to the Juvenile Court bench in the Cobb Judicial Circuit. Judge Whitfield fills the vacancy created by Judge Stephen Schuster's election as a superior court judge.

✱ **Judge Jim E. Wilbanks** was appointed to the Juvenile Court bench of the Conasauga Judicial Circuit on December 30, 2004.

✱ **Mr. Claud L. "Tex" McIver, III** of Atlanta was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission on February 15, 2005.

Honors

✱ **Chief Justice Norman S. Fletcher** was awarded the Weltner Freedom of Information Award from the Georgia First Amendment Foundation in a ceremony in Atlanta on March 5, 2005. Chief Justice Fletcher was selected because his Supreme Court decisions and opinions have consistently supported the public's right to know.

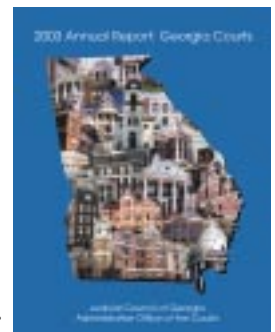
✱ On January 13, 2005 in Atlanta, **Judge Adele Grubbs**, Cobb Judicial Circuit, was awarded the State Bar of Georgia **Justice Robert Benham Award**.

Save the Date

✱ The next meeting of the **Judicial Council of Georgia** will be Wednesday, June 8, 2005 at the Marriott Savannah Riverfront Hotel. ☞

FY 03 Annual Report Available

The FY 03 Annual Report has recently been mailed. For additional copies, please contact the AOC at 404-656-5171.



The annual report includes court caseload information for Calendar Year 2002.

New Year Marked by Transitions

Justice Sears Begins Third Term

Following her successful re-election campaign Presiding Justice Leah Ward Sears took the oath of office on December 14, 2004 to begin her third term on the Supreme Court of Georgia.

The ceremony, held in the Supreme Court courtroom was attended by members of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. Music was provided by the Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy choir, of which Justice Sears's daughter is a member. Friends, family members, and colleagues enjoyed a reception following the program.

On March 3, 2005, the justices of the Supreme Court elected Justice



Chief Justice Norman S. Fletcher, left, administers the oath of office to Presiding Justice Leah Ward Sears.

Sears to become the court's next Chief Justice. Georgia's first female Chief Justice will assume the position on July 1, 2005. Justice Carol Hunstein was elected as the new Presiding Justice. ⚖️

2005 State of Judiciary Address

Chief Justice Norman S. Fletcher delivered the State of the Judiciary address to a joint session of the General Assembly on Wednesday, February 9, 2005. Below are some of the highlights of his remarks.

New Public Defender System

❖ Forty-two circuit public defender offices opened on January 1, 2005.

Georgia's new system is being recognized nationally for excellence.

Budget

❖ "The judiciary is in the justice business, and justice is not, nor should it ever be, a matter of politics."

Nonpartisan Elections

❖ Urged legislators to pass a measure so that probate and magistrate court judges are elected in nonpartisan races.

Judgeships

❖ Requested creation of new superior court judgeships which the Judicial Council has already approved. The need for 10 new superior court judgeships has been determined through valid and established criteria based on growing court caseloads in these circuits.

Court of Appeals

❖ Fund additional judgeships and office space for the Court of Appeals.

Administrative Office of the Courts

❖ Continues their efforts to provide current and essential information technology to courts throughout the state. ⚖️

George Collins Retires



District Court Administrators gathered on December 10, 2004 to wish long-time Ninth District Court Administrator George Collins well on his retirement.

Front row (l-r): Mr. George Collins and Ms. Judith Cramer.
Middle row: Ms. Cathy McCumber, Mr. John Cowart, Mr. Danny DeLoach, and Ms. Jody Overcash.
Back row: Mr. Tom Gunnels, Mr. Fred Roney, Mr. Nolan Martin, and Mr. Greg Jones. ⚖️

Profile: Judge Del Buttrill

Judge Del Buttrill, Probate Court of Henry County, was present in the House Chambers on January 27, 2005, for the reading of House Resolution 59, recognizing and commending his service to Henry County.

In part, the House Resolution reads, "By the example he has made of his life, Judge Del Buttrill makes this world a better place in which to live, and it is only fitting and proper that he be appropriately recognized as one of Georgia's most distinguished citizens and public servants."

On February 5, 2005, the Flint Judicial Circuit held a community appreciation service in honor of Judge Buttrill and his outstanding contributions to the county. The



Judge Del Buttrill

event, held at the Salem Baptist Church in McDonough, featured local speakers and musical performances by church choirs. Speakers included Judge Arch McGarity, Judge A.J. "Buddy" Welch, Judge Ben Studdard, and Judge James T. Chafin, Jr., all of the Henry County courts; Judge DeWitt Simonton, Spalding County Probate Court; Senior Probate Judge Eugene Lawson; Mr. Tommy K. Floyd, Flint Judicial Circuit District Attorney; and Ms. Marla Moore of the AOC. All expressed admiration for and good wishes to Judge Buttrill.

First elected as Henry County Probate Judge in 1982, Judge Buttrill has recently undergone treatment for lung cancer and faces a continuing battle with the disease. ☹️

Power, Justice & Prejudice

Georgia Commission Hosts Conference

The 17th Annual Meeting of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts will be held in Atlanta April 13-16, 2005. The theme of the conference is "Power, Justice and Prejudice."

The Georgia Commission on Access and Fairness in the Courts is hosting the meeting which will be held at the Omni Hotel, CNN Center, Atlanta.

Speakers will address issues confronting the judiciary, prosecutors, public defenders, etc., including delivery of civil legal services, prosecutorial discretion,

the impact of domestic violence on women of color, minorities in the juvenile justice system, and removing language and access barriers in the courts.

Invited speakers include Justice Robert Benham, Supreme Court of Georgia; former U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young; Judge Barbara J. Mobley, State Court of DeKalb County; Honorable Gwendolyn R. Keyes, District Attorney of the Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit; and Ms. Phyllis Holmen, Georgia Legal Services.

For more information, contact Ms. Stephanie Chambliss at chamblis@gaoc.us or by phone: 404-463-3927. ☹️



April 13-16, 2005

**Click onto
what's happening ...**

www.georgiacourts.org

E-filing with OXCI, Rules of Court

A demonstration of emerging electronic filing (e-filing) technology was given by the AOC Technology Division on January 26, 2005 for members of the Supreme Court Clerk's staff. A mock death penalty appeal was successfully filed as an example of the pioneering data-exchange system.

The system, based on Open XML Court Interface (OXCI), is part of a national effort to implement electronic filing and data exchange in all levels of state courts.

The OXCI success places Georgia in the vanguard of e-filing technology. The work will assist in implementation of standards-based

Extensible Mark-up Language (XML) communications.

This demonstration confirmed the ability to transmit and receive key data field items to and from a distant location using national standards. This is an integral step toward fulfilling the goal of integrated justice through data sharing. It enables data and documents to be easily transmitted from one database to another database for case filings.

The technology can be adapted to allow the exchange of other data and transactions – setting the stage so that courts and other agencies will soon be able to exchange information over the Internet. The Supreme Court of Georgia and Washington County Superior Court are pilot sites for the project.



Ms. Sukhada Tapshalkar, Mr. Richard Baker, and Emerging Technology Group Manager Rex McElrath developed the OXCI project.

Uniform Rules Web Page

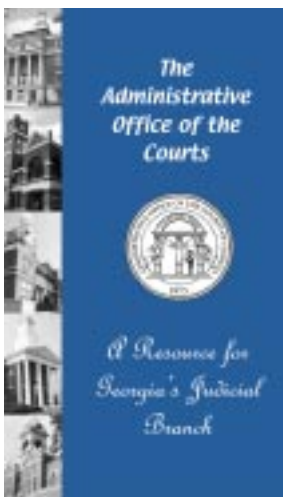
The AOC has been working for several months with the Supreme Court Clerks' Office and the Office of the Reporter of Decisions to create and maintain a web page with an up-to-date, comprehensive set of the Uniform Rules of the Court. The Uniform Rules of the Superior Courts and the State Courts were recently added.

The page has links to the Supreme Court Alternative Dispute Resolution Rules, the State Bar of Georgia Handbook, Rules of the Office of Bar Admissions, Rules of the Judicial Qualifications Commission, Code of Judicial Conduct, Unified Appeal Procedure, Uniform Transfer Rules, Supreme Court Rule on Interpreters, as well as the Uniform Rules for all levels of court. ☞

See <http://www.georgiacourts.org/rules.html>

AOC Brochure

Services provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts are outlined in a new edition of the AOC brochure. To request copies of the brochure call 404-656-5171.



Court of Appeals Revises Rules

The Court of Appeals of Georgia by administrative order on December 6, 2004 has amended its rules effective January 6, 2005. Copies of the rules are posted at www.gaappeals.us and printed paper copies are available at the Office of the Clerk of the Court of Appeals, located in the State Judicial Building, Atlanta, Georgia.

The following rules have been revised in some manner: Rules 1-2, 4, 6, 9, 14, 17-19, 23-33, 37-38, 40-41.

For further information, contact Mr. William L. Martin, Clerk/Court Administrator at martinw@gaappeals.us or 404-657-8352. ☞

Juvenile Court Showcase

Douglas County Addresses Children's Mental Health Issues

Douglas County Juvenile Court has adopted a computerized mental health assessment to help judges and court staff obtain information on the mental health of the children they serve. The goal is early identification of mental health problems.

The court has assigned two intake workers to administer a mental health questionnaire to every child involved in delinquency proceedings.

Ms. Jenny McDade, Director, Juvenile Programs Administration, stated, "We use the process to detect mental health issues that may be affecting the child's behavior. The assessment does not provide a diagnosis, but it helps in making immediate referrals to licensed practitioners for further assessment and a diagnosis." In two recent cases, the assessment led to investigations of abuse in the home and the child's removal by the courts.

The Mauldin Pattern Assessment test that Douglas County uses was created by John Mauldin, Ph.D., founder of PsyPractice in LaGrange. It consists of a set of master questions that explore: the child's sense of emotional support, safety, rules, rule violation, and coping abilities. Based on the child's responses, another set of tests may be given to explore the responses more deeply. For example, a positive response to

the statement, "I don't feel that I have anything to live for," would trigger additional questions about ideas of suicide and deliver a risk score for suicide.



Judge Peggy Walker

The subtests provide data on risk factors including alcohol use, drug abuse, suicide, homicide, psychosis, personality disorders such as an anger or an eating disorder, violent behaviors and anxiety or depression.

Opening Avenues for Treatment

Children's responses open up avenues for treatment. A child who has experienced a death in the family can be referred for grief counseling, which could prevent more serious problems such as anxiety or depression from overwhelming the child.

"If we do a better job of connecting families with services at the point of entry we can do a better job of keeping them out of the court system," said Judge Peggy Walker. "They are resorting to the courts because they don't know how to connect to the services."

For further information, contact Jenny McDade at 770-920-7121. ♠

Jackson County Courthouse

On November 11, 2004 an Open House was held at the new Jackson County Courthouse located in Jefferson. Judges and attorneys from around the Piedmont

Judicial Circuit and north Georgia were invited to tour the new facility after business hours. Chief Judge Robert W. Adamson, Judge David Motes and Judge Joseph Booth, all of the superior courts of the Piedmont Judicial Circuit, proudly showed visitors the new jury rooms, courtrooms, offices and other features of the courthouse. Many other Jackson County officials attended the event sponsored by the Piedmont Bar Association. ♠



From left: Mr. Wayne Wilbanks, Jackson County construction consultant; Chief Judge Robert W. Adamson, Piedmont Circuit; Judge Thomas Hodges, Northern Circuit; Judge Purnell Davis, Toombs Circuit; and Mr. Tom Gunnels, Tenth District DCA celebrate the opening of the Jackson County Courthouse.

Juvenile Court Showcase

Two Middle Georgia Circuits Work to Curb Truancy

Juvenile Court Judges Thomas C. Rawlings, Middle Circuit, and Philip Spivey, Ocmulgee Circuit, have adopted a problem-solving approach to children referred to court for frequent school absences. The first step for these judges is a solution tailored to the individual child.

In the Middle Circuit, schools refer a child to the juvenile court after at least five unexcused absences. Typically Judge Rawlings invites the child and family to appear informally before him to identify the causes underlying the absences and possible solutions.

In issuing the invitation, Judge Rawlings makes it clear that the meeting is voluntary, and there is no presumption of wrongdoing. The parties may bring their attorneys or choose a formal hearing instead.

If the parties fail to attend the initial meeting or the truancy continues, and is willful on the part of parents or child, a formal petition alleging truancy is filed by the District Attorney.

"We try to dispose of 80% of the cases informally," Judge Rawlings said. "Sometimes the truancy is because parents don't know that medical services can be accessed at the school, so they keep a child home for treatment. We serve as an information source for families and are able to divert many cases to social service."

He has found that children stay away from school because of bullying, difficulty learning, medical problems, and parental abuse.

"Statistics show that truancy is a leading indicator for child neglect, familial dysfunction and juvenile delinquency," Judge Rawlings said.



Judge Thomas C. Rawlings (left) and Judge Philip Spivey are working to curb truancy in their circuits.

Parenting Skills Class

The truancy program has led to the creation of a non-profit agency that provides parenting classes on topics such as getting children ready for school and helping them understand the need for education. The court also works with Latino support groups to explain to migrant workers that school attendance is compulsory.

Organizational Challenges in the Ocmulgee Circuit

Juvenile Court Judge Philip Spivey, Ocmulgee Circuit, faces similar truancy issues but has more complex organizational challenges.

For several years, Judge Spivey has used his own protocol for the handling of truancy cases. Now he

is working to establish a protocol that meets new legislative requirements. This means interacting with eight different school boards and multiple agencies.

"The protocol would cover what happens before a case comes to court and after a child is adjudicated unruly," Judge Spivey said.

He hopes the new protocol will increase the number of truancy cases that can be informally adjusted.

If the court determines that the parent is responsible for the child's absences, a Protective Order can be issued directing the parent to comply with a court plan. Other agencies can also be brought in to provide needed social services for the child.

Since, obtaining services in rural areas can be difficult. Both Judge Spivey and Judge Rawlings support legislation now under consideration by the General Assembly to allow juvenile court supervision fees to be used for truancy intervention services. ♠

Note: Senate Bill 97, a measure that would authorize collection of supervision fees in juvenile courts in Georgia for the purpose of providing truancy intervention services is now moving through the General Assembly. The bill has passed the Senate and has been favorably reported by the House Judiciary Committee. Consult the AOC legislative website at www.ciclt.com/aoc/default.asp to follow this bill's progress.

Juvenile Court Showcase

DeKalb's Juvenile Court Honored with Georgia Council of Court Administrators Program of the Year Award

The DeKalb County Juvenile Court is riding high. Its Youth Achievement Program has been honored as the Georgia Council of Court Administrators' (GCCA) Program of the Year, and its use of radio-frequency identification technology to track case files was recently featured in a national magazine.

Mr. Daniel DeLoach, First District Court Administrator, presented the GCCA award in a special ceremony at the Supreme Court of Georgia. The Youth Achievement Program (YAP) works to redirect DeKalb County's most at-risk youth toward achieving skills that will ultimately lead to a strong and responsible adulthood. YAP provides a comprehensive year-round employment preparation program that includes tutoring, employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational training, financial assistance, gang prevention, mentoring, and referrals to partner agencies.

Over 180 youth have been served since the program was founded in 2004, with 25% of those participating placed in jobs. YAP has a 20% diploma/GED attainment rate. In addition, two participants have entered college and two have joined the military.

The program has received strong support from former DeKalb

Chief Juvenile Court Judge Gregory A. Adams and current Chief Judge Robin S. Nash. Developed with



Mr. Danny DeLoach, far left, presents Chief Judge Robin Nash, DeKalb County Juvenile Court, and Mr. Brian Alleyne, Youth Achievement Program Acting Program Manager, with the GCCA Program of the Year award. Chief Justice Norman S. Fletcher, right, assists in the presentation.

input from Juvenile Court Director of Court Services, Dale Phillips, the program is backed by a two-year, \$600,000 Youth Offender Reentry grant from the U.S. Department of Labor.

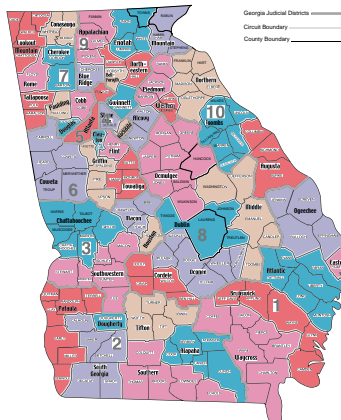
Tracking Case Files

The juvenile court's use of radio-frequency identification technology (RFID) to keep track of juvenile case files was featured in the January 24 issue of the magazine, Information Week.

RFID is commonly used by retail stores to track supplies. It uses labels with passive semiconductors that transmit radio signals to label-readers by means of handheld devices and specialized software. The information can be linked into the court's case management software. DeKalb court officials hope the technology will slash the more than 10 hours/week that court clerks currently spend trying to find paper files in the three-story courthouse.

For further information, contact Dale Phillips at 404-294-2777 or dpPhillips@co.dekalb.ga.us

Judicial Circuit Map



Didn't get a map last time around? Copies are still available.

The Judicial Circuit map can be used as a quick reference for the state's circuits and is free of charge.

For more information on obtaining a map, contact Ashley Stollar at stollara@gaaoc.us or 404-656-6783.

Conasauga Circuit Drug Court Program

Can a drug court program induce meth users to quit the habit and get sober? In the Conasauga Circuit, where methamphetamine is the drug of choice, a dedicated judge, drug court staff and treatment-providers are doing their utmost to prove it can.

A Day in Court

On a recent day, a woman appears before Superior Court Judge Jack Partain charged with possession of

methamphetamine. She gives her age as 39. The woman has previous convictions for possession with intent to distribute and for shoplifting. Her husband and teenage daughter have ordered her to leave their home. She pleads with Judge Partain to allow her to enter the drug court program.

The judge warns her that entering the two-year program could be the hardest thing she has ever done; serving time in jail would be easier. She must commit to giving up her drug habit, avoid unlawful persons and places, and submit to regular drug testing. The drug court protocol also includes unscheduled visits by probation and police officers, attendance at a 12-step program, as well as drug court sessions. The defendant must hold down a full-time job, pay treatment fees, obtain court permission before changing her residence, and comply with other conditions.

The woman agrees to comply. Her sentence is five years in jail, probated on condition she complete the drug court program. After handing down the sentence, Judge Partain introduces the woman to her



Mr. George Shirilla, Conasauga Circuit Drug Court Coordinator, (left) discusses an issue with Judge Jack Partain.

drug court “team:” the judge, an Assistant District Attorney, a sheriff’s deputy or police officer, a probation officer, treatment providers, a public defender, and Conasauga Circuit

Drug Court Coordinator, George Shirilla. The team will monitor client progress and assist when problems arise.

Before each drug court session begins, the team meets to discuss participants’ progress. It is a time-consuming process that occurs each week. Prior to court, participants meet separately as a group with a treatment provider, and offer each other support.

Individual Review

Once the drug court session starts, Judge Partain calls each participant individually, reviews their progress, and encourages them to keep going. Milestones are celebrated. “It is significant that they are

having birthdays instead of the alternative,” Judge Partain said. Some backsliding is expected. Possible sanctions range from community service to incarceration.

Many participants in the Conasauga Circuit Drug Court have been charged with possession of meth. Some also face charges of theft, forgery, and dealing/manufacturing illegal drugs. Ages range from teenage to middle age. Most work in Dalton’s carpet mills.

While some participants admit that they entered the program to avoid jail time, all agree that they have gained more than their liberty. “The biggest thing is the support group itself. When I mess up, it’s harder to go in front of them than in front of the judge,” one said. Many have lost their connection to their families because of their habit, and

the group creates a substitute family whose members help each other out, another participant said.

Group Support

Several participants said the program has made them more responsible.

“I wouldn’t have done anything for anyone, but now I will try and help,” said one participant. Another took his son to the doctor on his own initiative. Another got custody of his child with the help of Mr. Shirilla. One woman said she had contacted the local Department of Family and Children’s Services to gain custody of her grandchild after realizing that her son and daughter-

**“You don’t realize
it’s affecting you
until you have
lost everything.”**

— Program Participant —

2004-2005 Georgia Courts Directory Corrections

Please note these corrections and additions.

SUPERIOR COURT

Alcovy Circuit

Chief Judge John M. Ott
303 S. Hammond Drive, Suite 221
Monroe, GA 30655
770-267-1339/F 266-1630

Paulding Circuit

Add: Judge James R. Osborne
201 Paulding County Courthouse
11 Courthouse Square
Dallas, GA 30132
770-443-7551/F 443-7554

SENIOR JUDGES

Superior Court

Judge Frank S. Cheatham, Jr.
Two Sandy Point Road
Savannah, GA 31404-3230

STATE COURT

Coweta County

Add: Judge Seay V. Poulakos
12 E. Broad Street
Newnan, GA 30263
770-252-5428/F 252-4130

JUVENILE COURT

Cobb Circuit

Add: Judge James R. Whitfield
1738 County Services Parkway, SW
Marietta, GA 30008-4028
770-528-2428/F 528-2561

Conasauga Circuit

Add: Judge Jim E. Wilbanks
301 W. Crawford Street
Dalton, GA 30720
706-275-8838/F 275-8837

PROBATE COURT

Walton County

Judge H. Greg Adams
303 S. Hammond Drive, Suite 113
Monroe, GA 30655

MAGISTRATE COURT

Crawford County

Add: Judge Leslie Zoltowski
PO Box 568
Roberta, GA 31708
478-836-5804/F 836-4340

MUNICIPAL COURT

Newington

Delete: Judge Martha Kirkland

Add: Judge Grady Reddick
PO Box 1923
Sylvania, GA 30467
912-564-7821/F 564-7844

Senior Judges Appointed

On January 4, 2005, Governor Sonny Perdue appointed the following senior judges:

APPELLATE

Judge Frank M. Eldridge

SUPERIOR COURT

Judge Fred A. Bishop
Judge Clarence D. Blount
Judge Alice D. Bonner
Judge E. Purnell Davis
Judge Aubrey Duffey
Judge Philip F. Etheridge
Judge W.A. Foster
Judge Hilton Fuller
Judge Whitfield R. Forrester
Judge Robert P. Mallis
Judge Albert M. Pickett
Judge Marvin W. Sorrells
Judge Michael Stoddard

STATE COURT

Judge Howard E. Cook
Judge Michael A. Fennessy
Judge Mathew Robins

JUVENILE COURT

Judge George J. Hearn, III

PROBATE COURT

Judge Aileen H. Gay
Judge Joyce J. Hawkins

MAGISTRATE COURT

Judge Charles G. Brewer ⚖️

*For a comprehensive
update of
newly-elected superior,
state, probate, and
magistrate court
judges go to
[www.georgiacourts.org/
aoc/directory](http://www.georgiacourts.org/aoc/directory)*

AOC Technology Staff Looks Ahead

Mr. Jorge Basto has joined the staff of the AOC Information Technology Division. Mr. Basto has been named Senior Manager, Application Development and Support. He and Mr. Byron Branch, recently named Senior Manager, Support Services, will direct the project and staff of the IT Division.

Mr. Basto and Mr. Branch will also oversee changes to the Help Desk procedures that are designed

to provide more streamlined delivery of services to clients.

Under the new guidelines, a call for technical assistance coming in from a judge or court staff will be fielded by the local District Court Administrator. The DCA will assign the call a priority depending on how urgent the need is. Calls will also be monitored by AOC



Mr. Jorge Basto

staff. A new online service request form, HEAT (Helpdesk Expert

Automation Tool) has been designed to speed up the processing of these requests.

LANDesk, another new feature, allows AOC tech staff to respond to local problems from the central office. Upgrades to SUS-TAIN and Georgia Jury are now being made remotely,

saving many hours of travel time and money. When necessary, however, technical field support staff will continue to make site visits to courts.

For more information, contact Jorge Basto at 404-657-9673 or bastoj@gaaoc.us ☎

Electronic Traffic Citations — Try “TIPS”

AOC information technology staff has developed a web-based program that will allow Georgia courts to file traffic citations in the new electronic format required by the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety (DMVS).

Development of TIPS was funded by the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety and was completed in collaboration with DMVS.

July Deadline

In a recent letter to clerks of court, DMVS Commissioner James R. Davis emphasized the July deadline for filing convictions electronically using the prescribed Georgia

Electronic Citation Processing System (GECPS) format. “As of July 1, 2005, DMVS will no longer accept any conviction reports processed electronically by any means other than the GECPS process. All

courts who currently use the old format and method of transmission must be converted to the new process,” he wrote.

For information about TIPS, contact Mr. Steve Nevels at 404-463-5178 or nevelss@gaaoc.us ☎

**DMVS
DEADLINE:
JULY 1, 2005**

**All traffic
convictions MUST
be processed
through GECPS.**

TIPS

TIPS (Traffic Information Processing System) correctly processes the citation and calculates the fees that must be paid to different funds by each county. The web page screen is formatted like the paper citation. A DSL Internet connection and a browser are needed to use the program.

The traffic citation data is housed on AOC servers, with double redundancy – meaning that if one server fails, another will still be available. The data then transfers to the DMVS server over secure connections.

Conasauga Circuit Drug Court Program cont.

in-law were also abusing meth – something she would not have considered doing before joining the drug court program.

Still, breaking the cycle of addiction is difficult. Meth is abundant in Dalton, and most agreed that it gives a better “high” and lasts longer than other drugs. It also costs less. Participants also recognized its downside – memory loss, mood swings, and violent behavior.

“You don’t realize it’s affecting you until you have lost everything,” one participant said.

For more information, contact Conasauga Drug Court Coordinator, George Shirilla, (706) 281-4811 or gshirilla@whitfieldcountyga.com ☎

Robert L. Doss, Jr., Honored by Georgia Council of Court Administrators

On January 6, 2005, Mr. Robert L. Doss, Jr., was recognized for his career achievements in Georgia court administration. A former Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, Mr. Doss was honored by the Georgia Council of Court Administrators with its William Barclay Herndon Award. Former Chief Justice Harold G. Clarke opened the award presentation ceremony which took place in the courtroom of the



Mr. Robert L. Doss, Jr.

Supreme Court of Georgia in Atlanta. Mr. Danny DeLoach, 1st District Court Administrator, presented the statuette on behalf of the Georgia Council of Court Administrators. Chief Justice Norman S. Fletcher and Mr. David L. Ratley, current AOC Director, also spoke of Mr. Doss's achievements and offered their congratulations. Mr. Doss's family, friends, and former colleagues were in attendance.



The Herndon Award

Mr. Doss served as AOC Director from 1975 until 1998. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Court Management and a former board member of the National Center for State Courts. He served as president of the Conference of State Court Administrators and on numerous state and national commissions and committees involving the judiciary. In 2002 the GCCA established the William Barclay Herndon Award to honor Mr. Herndon's early work in promoting court administration in Georgia.

NORMAN S. FLETCHER
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DAVID L. RATLEY
Director
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